



Creating a Lasting Impact: Constructing and Assessing Significant Student Learning Opportunities

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Outline

- Valuing Learning in Student Affairs
- Introducing Student Engagement & NSSE
- Case Study Walk through
 - Case Study Rationale
 - Institutional Context
 - Data Analysis
 - Connecting Data to Practice
- Brainstorming activity
 - Breakout groups
- Closing Remarks and Questions



Valuing Learning in Student Affairs

Shift in the field

(Moore & Marsh, 2007)

**From supporters and
enablers**

**To teachers and
educators**

**Student affairs educators
are promoters of learning
and academic
achievement
in virtually everything
they do with students**

J.H. Blake, 2007

Assessment in Student Affairs Today

FROM

**Counting programs,
bodies**

**Asking agreement
questions**

**Haphazard
assessment efforts**

TO

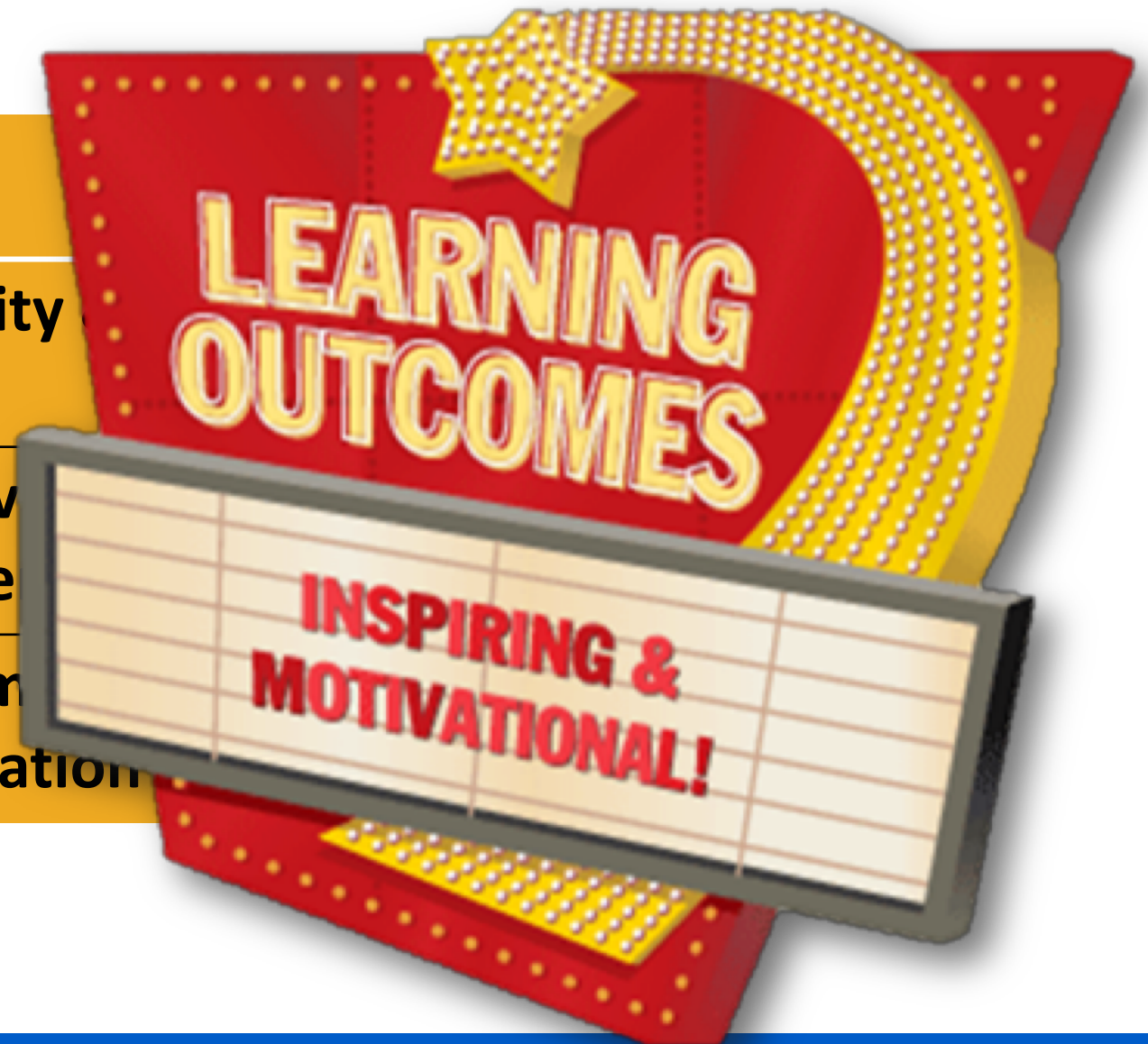
**Assessing quality,
SLOs**

**Asking, observing
behavior evidence**

**Formal assessment
offices/coordination**

Assessment in Student Affairs Today

FROM	TO
Counting programs, bodies	Assessing quality SLOs
Asking agreement questions	Asking, observing behavior evidence
Haphazard assessment efforts	Formal assessment offices/coordination



Valued Learning Outcomes & Student Affairs

More than 70% of employers identified: leadership, written communication, teamwork, problem solving, and work ethic as key skills for graduates

(AAC&U Employer Surveys)



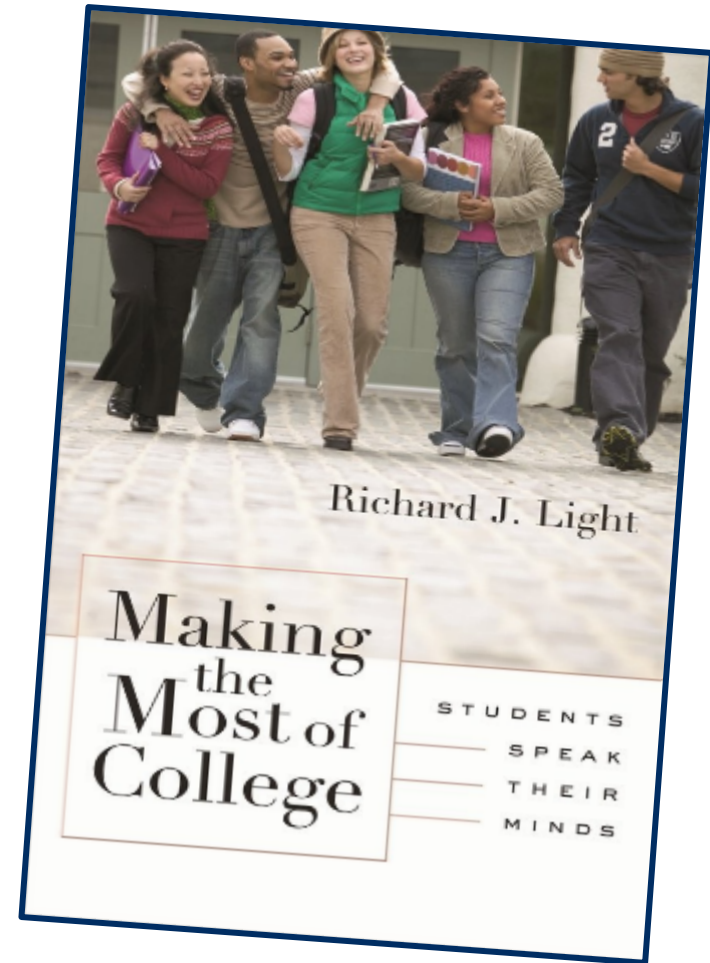
- **Alignment between these skills and learning outcomes pursued in student affairs is clear.**
- **Data suggest a myriad of experiences are embedded in co-curricular learning that can help develop these skills.**

(Kruger & Peck, 2017)

Valuing the Difference Student Affairs Makes

When we asked students to think of a specific, critical incident or moment that had changed them profoundly...

4 of 5 chose a situation or event outside the classroom.



Light, 2001 *Making the Most of College*

Using Data to Communicate Value in Student Affairs

Assessment tells a story to inform others of what is happening within your department and the division of student affairs and demonstrate the contribution to student learning

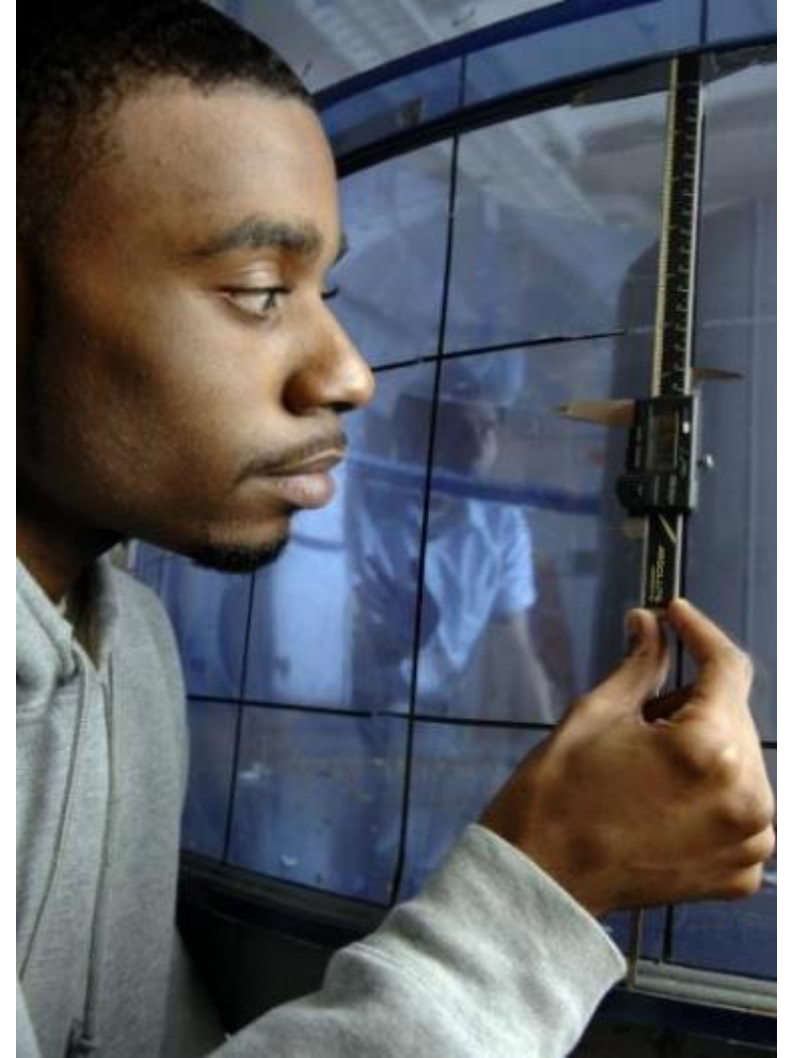


Using Student Engagement Data

Student Engagement:

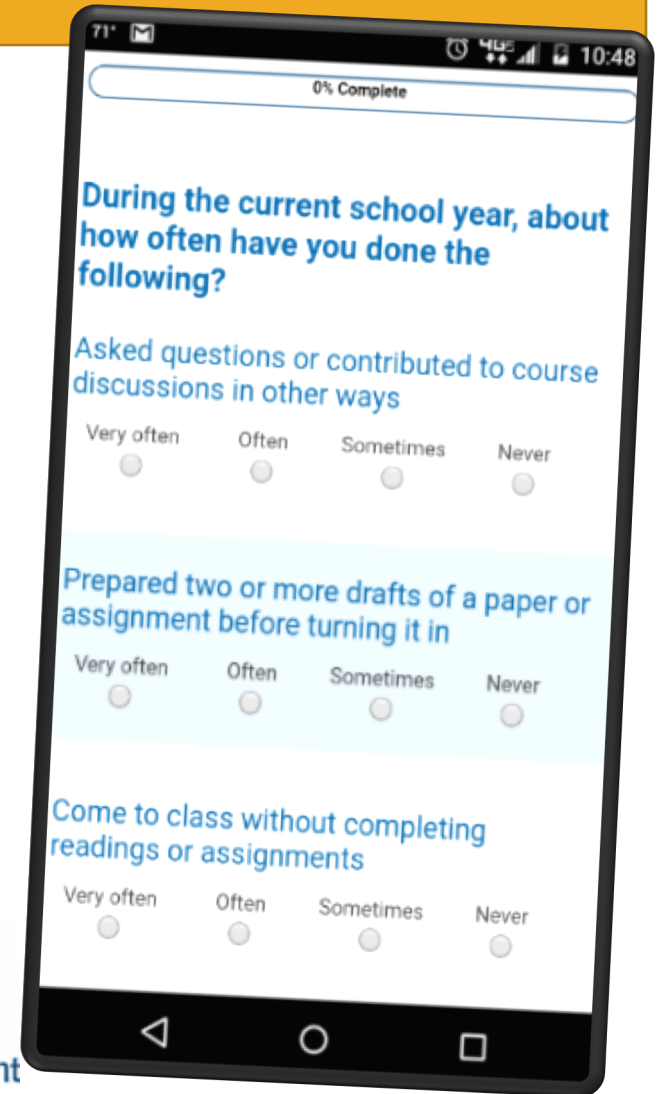
The extent to which students are exposed to and participate in effective educational practices

- Educationally purposeful activities and practices
- Empirically linked to desired outcomes



Student Engagement & NSSE

- Annual survey of first-year & senior students
- NSSE asks about time & effort students devote to behaviors linked to learning & development
- Results used to prove and improve undergraduate education





Student Engagement Data & Assessment

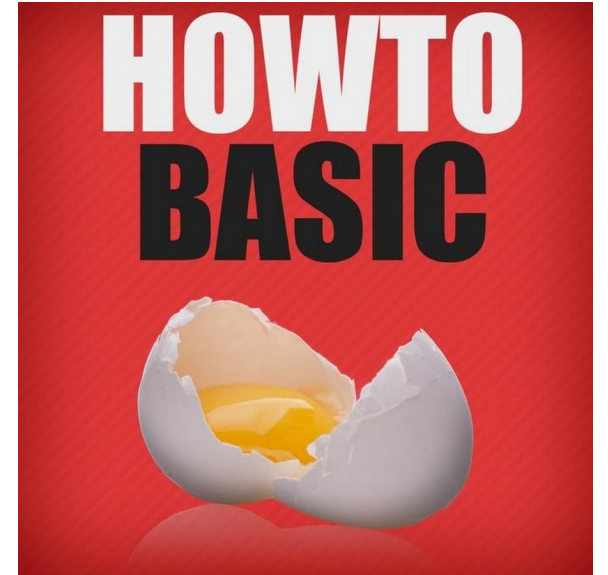
1,600

Colleges &
Universities have
NSSE data

- Do you have data on your campus?
- Is it being used to tell a story about your students learning?
- To guide improvements?
- To demonstrate benefits of student affairs?

Case Study Background

- Open-Ended Question: Most Significant Learning Experience
 - Qualitative analysis
- Connection to questions on the survey
 - Quantitative analysis



Who is NSSEville University?

- Public, four-year institution
- Located in a college town in the Midwest
- Doctoral institution with a large undergraduate population
 - 15 -20,000 undergraduate students
- Large residential community





Office of Student Life and Learning

- Creating an end-of-year report for the VP of Student Affairs
- Want to include assessment data to support our claims
- Given access to NSSE data from the Office of Institutional Research
- Opportunity to think strategically about next year
- Questions to consider:
 - What can we know from survey data about our office and our students?
 - What experiences are students naming as significant learning?
 - Why are these co-curricular experiences significant for students?

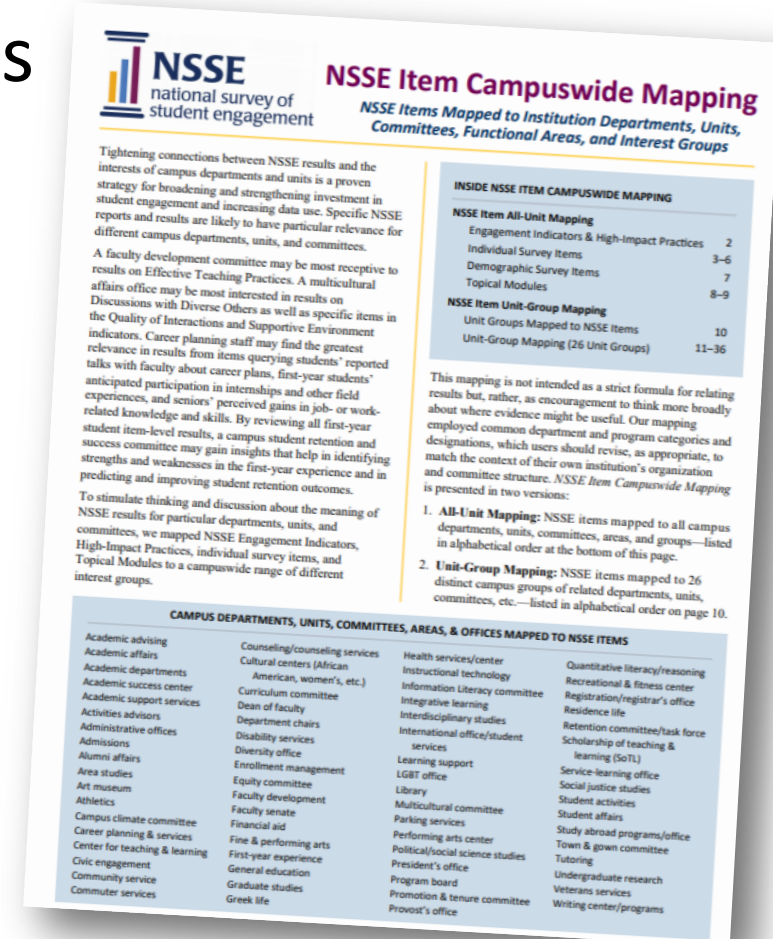


Determining NSSE Items for Inclusion

- NSSE Survey: Approximately 107 items students answer
- Eliminated questions explicitly course-based (Example: Explained course material to one or more students)
- Reviewed scaled-questions as a whole (Engagement Indicators)
- Reviewed remaining questions to determine which were relevant to student affairs, considering:
 - Is this an action, program, or outcome that we have control or influence?
 - Would these results inform our work?

Data

- Open Ended Question: 1148 total responses
- 25 survey items **related to Student Affairs**
 - Participation in leadership
- Engagement Indicators
 - Reflective & Integrative Learning
 - Discussion with Diverse Others
 - Supportive Environment
- Demographic Information
 - Ex: First-year and seniors



Data

- Open Ended Questions
- 25 survey items
 - Participation in
- Engagement Index
 - Reflective & Int
 - Discussion with
 - Supportive Env
- Demographic Information
 - Ex: First-year and

Unit Group 3 Mapped to NSSE Items

Activities advisors, Student activities, Student affairs

EIs and HIPs Mapped to Unit Group 3	
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning (CL) Discussions with Diverse Others (DD)
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions (QI)
High-Impact Practices	Learning Community Service-Learning Research with Faculty Internship/Co-op/Field Experience Study Abroad Culminating Senior Experience

Topical Modules Mapped to Unit Group 3
Experiences with Diverse Perspectives
First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions
Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity

NSSE Items Mapped to Unit Group 3

Question 1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

1d Attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)

Question 3. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

3b Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)

Question 11. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?

11b Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group

Nuts and Bolts

- Made dichotomous Variables
 - Recode
- Ran frequencies
- Ran descriptives
- Correlations
- T-tests
 - Determine significance
- Student Comments
- Connect comments to analysis



Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics - First Years

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discussions with Diverse Others	1020	0	60	39.44	13.635
Reflective and Integrative	1025	3	60	35.38	10.904
Supportive Environment	1022	0	60	36.02	11.924
Valid N (listwise)	1012				

Descriptive Statistics - Seniors

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discussions with Diverse Others	817	0	60	40.00	13.175
Reflective and Integrative	822	6	60	38.98	11.391
Supportive Environment	819	0	60	31.69	12.230
Valid N (listwise)	813				

Examining Associations: Correlations

Correlations - All Students										
		Reflective and Integrative Learning	Discussions with Diverse Others	Supportive Environment	Rtmcocurr	Rtmworkon	Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority?	oncampus	learncomR	leaderR
leaderR	Pearson Correlation	-0.200	-0.122	0.023	-0.200	-0.211	-0.084	-0.450	0.310	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.299	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	2089	2078	2027	2015	2017	1997	1996	2084	2094

Simplifying Variables: Dichotomizing

Formal leadership role in a student organization or group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Have not decided	229	9.4	10.9	10.9
	Do not plan to do	364	15.0	17.4	28.3
	Plan to do	686	28.3	32.8	61.1
	Done or in progress	815	33.6	38.9	100.0
	Total	2094	86.2	100.0	
Missing	System	334	13.8		
Total		2428	100.0		



Original item on the survey

leaderR

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	815	33.6	38.9	38.9
	1.00	1279	52.7	61.1	100.0
	Total	2094	86.2	100.0	
Missing	System	334	13.8		
Total		2428	100.0		



Recoded into a dichotomous variable

T-Tests: Leadership Exp. vs None

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differen	Std. Error	95% Confidence Lower	Upper
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Equal variances assumed	0.728	0.394	3.930	815	0.000	3.247	0.826	1.625	4.869
	Equal variances not assumed			3.904	583.978	0.000	3.247	0.832	1.613	4.880
Discussions with Diverse Others	Equal variances	0.308	0.579	2.337	812	0.020	2.250	0.963	0.360	4.140
	Equal variances not			2.341	599.328	0.020	2.250	0.961	0.362	4.137
Supportive Environment	Equal variances	0.320	0.572	3.456	813	0.001	3.076	0.890	1.329	4.823
	Equal variances not			3.476	606.539	0.001	3.076	0.885	1.338	4.813

Open-Ended Analysis

Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.



**Significant
learning**

***= Lasting
important
change in learner***



Open-Ended Analysis

- Performed an initial review of responses
- Coded responses relevant to the Office of Student Life and Learning
 - Engagement in co-curriculars, event attendance, residence life, interactions with staff and other students, leadership opportunities, etc.
- Narrowed selection of responses that aligned with our analysis
 - “Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group”
- Reviewed responses to answer the question: What makes this learning significant?



Open-Ended Context

Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.

- Coursework
- Interactions with faculty
- Study abroad
- Experiential Learning
- Service Learning



Open-Ended Context

Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.

- Coursework
- Interactions with faculty
- *Study abroad*
- *Experiential Learning*
- *Service Learning*

NSSEville University has an institutional focus on studying abroad and incorporating either experiential learning or service learning into the curriculum.



Open-Ended Context

Please describe the most significant learning experience you have had so far at this institution.

- *Coursework*
- *Interactions with faculty*
- Study abroad
- Experiential Learning
- Service Learning

The NSSE Survey has an initial focus of coursework and curriculum engagement which could shape the ways in which students think about this question.



Leadership and Significant Learning

What type of leadership did respondents name?


- Orientation Leader
- Resident Advisor
- Student organization (leadership roles)
- Attendance at conferences and institutes
- Service and academic fraternities
- Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Student Government




Leadership and Significant Learning

What makes these experiences significant?


- **Learning about who I am:** Gaining self-confidence; Ability to make an impact; Willingness to be vulnerable; Type of leader; Finding a career path
- **Leadership skills:** Communication; Responsibility, Public speaking; Program development
- **Community development:** Creating community; collaborating with others
- **Cross-cultural understanding:** Learning about people from different backgrounds; Considering different perspectives



“Being able to participate in many leadership opportunities on campus has given me the ability to grow beyond the classroom in ways that a book cannot teach you.”



“The leadership experience that I've had through student organizations are the most significant experiences that I've had. I've grown in self-confidence through them.”



“My most significant learning experience was when I lost the election for my Hall's Community Leadership Team President. I learned that succeeding in college takes more effort than in high school. I now know the level of effort that is needed to achieve my goals.”



Potential

- Incorporating demographic information with the open-ended responses
- Matching open-ended responses with other survey questions*
- Follow up survey
- Focus groups or individual interviews*

*Note: Although responses are not anonymous, students are guaranteed confidentiality when they complete NSSE (and many other surveys) make sure you are not identifying students in your analysis nor singling out specific students for focus groups or interviews based on their responses to questions



Discussion/Breakout

- Small group introductions:
 - Name, Position, and Institution
 - What brought you to this session?
 - Experience with assessment?
- **Questions for consideration:**
 - What type of significant learning do you see occurring in your department?
 - How can you utilize assessment data to measure learning?
 - Do you have NSSE data to use for assessment?



Conclusions

See, even more evidence that we ARE educators in higher education!

- Significant, high-impact learning occurs outside of the classroom in co-curricular spaces

Act to assess student learning!

- There are multiple avenues for assessing learning outcomes that can be incorporated into practice
- Important to make use of existing data
- Honor students input and voices in assessment
- Involve students in interpretation of results



Thanks so much for joining us!

For more information about NSSE and the slides visit: nsse.indiana.edu

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